

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1-4. (canceled).

5. (currently amended): A method ~~of therapy~~ for treating a herniated disc or herniated nucleus pulposus, ~~comprising—characterized by~~ directly administering ~~an active ingredient comprising matrix metalloproteinase-7 (MMP-7)~~ to the affected site of the herniated disc or herniated nucleus pulposus, with the proviso that matrix metalloproteinase-3 (MMP-3) also is not directly administered to said affected site.

6-8. (canceled).

9. (new): A method for treating a herniated disc or herniated nucleus pulposus, consisting essentially of administering MMP-7 to the affected site of the herniated disc or herniated nucleus pulposus.

10. (new): A method for treating a herniated disc or herniated nucleus pulposus, consisting of administering MMP-7 and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier to the affected site of the herniated disc or herniated nucleus pulposus.